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Anchorage Hosts Annual AASHTO Conference **To Address Key Transportation Decisions and Funding Strategies**

Anchorage: The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) welcomes more than 1,200 delegates as it hosts the 88th Annual Meeting for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) from October 10-15 at the Captain Cook and Egan Convention Center in Anchorage, Alaska.

AASHTO's Annual Meeting theme, "Reauthorization and the Future of Transportation," will drive this year's conference as state Department of Transportation (DOT) directors and other experts including Federal Highway Administrator Mary Peters and Federal Railroad Administrator Allan Rutter will discuss strategies for financing needed investment in U.S. highways and transit.

According to AASHTO President Brad Mallory of Pennsylvania, this year's meeting will focus on AASHTO's main priorities including reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, transportation safety issues, and the continuing need for environmental stewardship and streamlining in transportation. "We look forward to spending this year's conference in Alaska as we formulate strategies to meet the multiple transportation challenges we face throughout our nation in the coming years," said Mallory.

As Congress prepares to reauthorize the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), AASHTO will work to influence the amount of funding allocated for transportation projects. The organization has called for an increase in

highway capital funding, over six years, from \$34 billion to at least \$41 billion and in transit from \$7.5 billion to at least \$10 billion. If those increases come to bear, Alaska will see a sizable increase in its share of federal transportation funding.

“We are honored to host AASHTO’s 88th Annual Meeting,” said ADOT&PF Commissioner Joe Perkins. “This presents Alaska a tremendous opportunity to show off our state and share with key policy makers the importance of federal dollars to our transportation systems.”

Assistant Director of the U.S. DOT Emil Frankel and FHWA Administrator Peters will address the meeting’s General Session on Monday, October 14 at 8:30 a.m. Also featured is Jim Morris, the high school coach whose rise to big league pitcher was the basis of the inspirational film “The Rookie.”

A trade fair will be featured starting October 13 along with meetings of AASHTO’s Standing Committees on Quality, Highways, Planning, Aviation, Commissioners and Boards, and the Reauthorization Steering Committee. Several Award presentations will be made throughout the week and a legacy project dedicated to the City of Anchorage will be unveiled on Sunday at 1:00 p.m. during the trade fair.

AASHTO is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. It represents all five transportation modes: air, highways, public transportation, rail and water. AASHTO’S primary goal is to foster the development, operation and maintenance of an integrated national transportation system.

For more information on the AASHTO Annual Meeting, including the agenda, access the web site <http://www.transportation.org/calendar/2002annualmeeting/>.

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Media Note: A complete press kit is available by calling Wendy Lindskoog at (907) 265-2498.